FEMINISM AND EXPLORATION OF GENDER IDENTITY IN SELECT NOVELS OF MAGGIE GEE: AN ASSESSMENT.

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Introduction

"Feminism is the radical notion that women are human beings"

by Cheris Kramarae

Feminism alludes to the special ideological patterns that females ask for equal rights just as the after-effects of belief system when women know the world, the conscience and the sexual relationship in their process of looking for self-freedom. Charles Fourier, the French philosopher is credited with having coined the word Feminism in 1837, the words Feminism and Feminist previously showed up in France and Netherlands in 1872, Great Britain during the 1890s and the USA in 1910 and The Oxford English Dictionary records 1894 as the time of the primary appearance of the word Feminist and 1985 for Feminism.

The percept of women's rights advocates that social, political, efficient and every single other right of women are and ought to be equivalent to those of men. It is a composed development for the accomplishment of such rights for women. Emerging from the conviction that people ought to have parallel rights and openings, a ton of composed exercises in help of lady's rights and interests caused an attitudinal change in the hypothesis of political, financial, sociological and of distinction of conclusion towards both genders in most recent couple of decades. Feminism in writing has touched base from social developments that originate before the hypothesis. Thus women's liberation isn't just hypothetical philosophy, however, it is dynamic in nature. Its point isn't just to comprehend the encompassing scene yet endeavour to transform it. In present day world this philosophy has gotten a major upheaval in the Western nations. The primary target of this women's liberation is to destroy the offenses against women which were winning for ages under the name of traditions or culture or basically commonality.

Women's activitist developments have battled and kept on crusading for women rights, including the priviledge to cast a ballot, to hold open office, to work, to acquire reasonable wages or equivalent pay to possess property, to get training, to enter contracts, to include rise, to rights inside marriage and to have maternity leave. Women's activities have like-wise attempted to guarantee access to lawful premature births and social co-ordination and to shield women and young girls from assault, inappropriate behaviour, and household violence.

Changes in dress and adequate physical action have frequently been a piece of woman's activist development.

Feminist theory intends to comprehend the idea of sexual orientation disparity by analyzing women's social jobs and lived understanding, and has created speculations in an assortment of orders so as to react to issues concerning sex. While giving an investigate of the social and political relations a lot of feminist theories additionally centre around the advancement of women's rights and interests. Topics investigated in feminist theory incorporate separation, stereotyping, generalization (particularly sexual generalization), persecution and patriarchy.

In this research I would like to talk about Maggie Gee and feminism in her select works. Maggie Gee is one of the most proliferate British writer. She was born in Poole, Dorset, and taught at state schools and Somerville College, Oxford where she finished two degrees in English. In the wake of working in distributing as an editorial manager, she took her research at Wolverhampton Polytechnic where she finished a PhD in The Self-Conscious Novel from Sterne to Vonnegut. Gee lived in London with her spouse, the writer and telecaster Nicholas Rankin. Her initially distributed novel was *Dying, in Other Words* (1981), a dark parody in which, as far as one knows, a dead lady triumphantly revises the account of her own demise. In 1982 Maggie Gee was chosen as one of the first 20 'Best of Young British novelists' and moved toward becoming Writing Fellow at University of East Angila. Along with her first work came her list of other writings. *Anthology of Writing Against War: From Life on Earth (1982), The Burning Book (1983), Light Years (1985), Grace(1988), Where Are the Snows? (1991), Lost Children (1994), The Burning Book(1994), How May I Speak in My Own Voice? Language and the Forbidden (1996), The Ice People (1998), The White Family (2002), Diaspora City: The London New Writing Anthology (2003), The Flood(2004), My Cleaner(2005), The Blue (2006), The Driver (2009), My Animal Life (2010),* and her most recent work *Virginia Woolf in Manhattan (2014).*

The present research is put forward to analyze, and interpret feminist approaches and perspectives in Maggie Gee's select works. It endeavours to investigate the portrait, the position and portrayal of women in the fictitious world of Maggie Gee and perceive how these women characters are generally in struggle with the familial, social, cultural and even political powers of their time so as to make their own space and spot thereby actualising their individual selves. In this research, researcher will include the select works of Maggie Gee

namely, *The Burning Book (1983), Where Are the Snows?(1991), My Cleaner (2005), My Driver (2009), My Animal Life (2010) and Virginia Woolf in Manhattan (2014).*

Research problem

The research work endeavours to examine a detailed feminist analysis of the select novels of British writer Maggie Gee, so as to discover how the author manages to tell the issues of struggle and submissiveness in the lives of her female characters, primarily.

Gee sets up a fine equalization in her composition among art and importance, individual and social. By including characters white, dark, gay, lesbian, straight, youthful, old, instructed and common labourers and regarding them all as parts of the whole, Gee's novels offer a collection of work that cuts over the limits of race, hierarchy and gender-specific.

This research work will not study the female suppressions only but also other themes like, the man-woman and woman to woman relationship, the role of system in stereotyping females, the effect contemporary world has on women, the patriarchy set ups in society and its effect on female psyche, and many more.

Objective:

The present study is taken to define the concept of feminism. The analysis of nature and the characteristic features of feminism is subsequently another aim of present research study. This study will further explore the style, the structure and the element of contemporary feminism in the texts. Adding to the above mentioned features, this study will also attempt to examine numerous perspectives, the diagnostic examination and assessment of the select works.

The exploration of applied framework of feminism is to be achieved through perspectives, surveys and the interpretations found in the archival investigation of the feminism.

Objectives:

1. To comprehend an expansive framework of the significant trademark highlights of feminism in literature.
2. To give an analytical examination of the method of character portrayal and the literal understanding of the set-up utilized in Maggie Gee's select works in the light of feminism.
3. To elucidate and figure out as well as give an analytical study of thematic structure used in the select works of Maggie Gee.
4. To explore the change in patriarchy from 1982-2014 in the select works of Maggie Gee.

In this research my approach will be to fulfil some of the aforementioned objectives.

Plan of work

This whole research will study the diverse themes of feminism and feminist theories to be applied in the works of profound author Maggie Gee. This work will be divided in six chapters excluding title, content, acknowledgement and bibliography.

The tentative plan of the research will be as follows:

1. Introduction.
2. Background and emergence of feminism.
3. Feminist theme in select works of Maggie Gee.
4. Study of Uganda novels: *My Cleaner* and *My Driver*.
5. Contemporary set- up in Maggie Gee's select novels.
6. Conclusion

Review of literature:

Maggie Gee

Author was born in Poole, Dorset, and she gained her knowledge at State schools and Somerville College, Oxford where she finished two years degrees in English. Subsequent to working in distributing as an editorial manager, she took an examination work at Wolverhampton Polytechnic where she finished a PhD. *Dying in Other Words* (1981), was her opening novel, a trial dark parody in which an apparently dead lady triumphantly changes the narrative of her own demise. She has written plethora of works since then, latest being *Virginia Woolf in Manhattan* which came in 2014.

The style of Maggie Gee's composing is frequently connected to the modernist tradition. She has said that her persuasions incorporate Woolf, Nabokov and Beckett, yet in addition Nineteenth century authors, for example, Dickens and Thakeray. John Cotton remarks on Gee's synchronization of eighteenth and nineteenth century styles with modernist techniques: 'Gee can be seen, inspite of (or perhaps because of) her experimentation, to be in the tradition of Feilding and Dickens where the author is ever-present, ready to comment or intervene'. Her work is frequently ironical and constantly educated by contemporary political and social issues. She consolidates household concerns of affection, hatred, harshness, misfortune, compromise and the ever perplexing trap of family connections with societal and worldwide issues, for example, vagrancy, destitution, environmental change and atomic weapons.

In 1982 Maggie Gee was chosen as one of the first twenty 'Best of Young British Novelists' and moved toward becoming Writing Fellow at the University of East Angila. Maggie Gee is a Fellow and Vice-President of the Royal Society of Literature. She has been an individual from the Society of Authors' Committee of Management and the administration's Public Lending Right Committee, and was from 2004-2008 the principal female Chair of Council of the Royal Society of Literature. She is presently one of its Vice Presidents. She is visiting Professor of Creative Writing at Sheffeild Hallam University and lives in London with her better half, the writer and telecast, Nicholas Rankin. In 2012 she was granted an OBE for making valuable contributions in the feild of English Literature.

"A Sense of Completeness, of Understanding, Enfolding All Difference": An Interview with Maggie Gee

A contemporary novelist, Maggie Gee's works have been accepted and appreciated by her readers, which ultimately encouraged her in contributing more of her work on larger scale. Frequently using big public scenes in her writings, Maggie Gee longs for a sense of completeness, of understanding, etc. Accordingly, some of her novels, such as *Where Are the Snows(1991), Lost Children (1994), The White Family (2002), My Cleaner (2005),* and *My Driver (2009),* explore social problems, such as consumer culture, split families, lost generation, class conflicts, alienation, racism, and homophobia, with a narrative technique that can be largely categorised as realist. In *The Ice People* (1998) and *The Flood* (2004), Gee employs different narrative modes, such as dystopia, fantasy, and science fiction, to illustrate contemporary problems, including climate change, global warming, and societies. Her autobiography *My Animal Life* (2010) addresses the question of what happens to people when they lose their physical, biological context, and the way this state is reflected in literature. Maggie Gee makes a significant contribution to contemporary English literature.

Dr. Tanu Gupta & Pooja Singal in their paper **"Father-Son Relationship in Post Apocalyptic World: A Study of Maggie Gee's *The Ice People* and Cormac McCarthy's *The Road*:**

In this paper, researchers have talked about the post apocalyptic novels, which paint a devastated world with characters who are physically, socially, culturally and psychologically broken. In this ruined world, only filial relations seems to sustain for the longest time. The bond between parents and children survives the blows of hunger, violence and all sorts of risks. In some novels of this genre, the father son relationship has been highlighted by the author, as the most intimate and beautiful one. The absence of mothers in the lives of these children makes the father son bond even more prominent. The novels taken in this paper are sagas of the survival of these duos against all odds: lack of food, existence of murderers, rapists and cannibals, appalling climate, disease and pervasive death. In such conditions, the man (The Road) and Saul (The Ice People) put in every effort to navigate their sons to safety. Though none of them fully succeeds in his motive but the motherly care, affection, concern and anxiety, regarding the well being of the child, shown by both the characters is heart

warming. Both the novels are disparate in many respects but the treatment of father son relationship has been done in quite a remarkable way.

Sandra Müller's A Conservative Backlash in UK Publishing? The Case of Maggie Gee's *The White Family*: Sandra says, Maggie Gee's novel *The White Family* would almost never have been published. In contrast to other Contemporary novels that are far less critical of multicultural Britain, you will be in Gees novels faced with different forms of racism. Sandra Müller (Berlin) shows in her article how concentration processes in British publishing influence literary trends. She explains with the example of *The White Family*, which pressure to adopt authors are exposed. Maggie Gee's epic *The White Family* is one case of a novel which bargains with the difficulties to multiculturalism. It is a novel which investigates the roots and after-effects of generalizations and racism, not just in uneducated communities, yet rather in white working class families just as worker communities. An acclaimed writer, Maggie Gee urgently attempted to have her 6th novel distributed by her standard and afterward by other standard distribute this troublesome content. The instance of Maggie Gee's epic The White Family delineates that the British distributing industry isn't as innovation accommodating as they may need to influence writers and per users to accept, yet or may be progressively preservationist.

Dr. Rajaram Sitaram Zirange, PhD. Bharati Vidyapeeth University , Pune, Maharashtra, India, in his paper **Maggie Gee's *The Flood*: A Socio-Political Satire in theApocalyptic Mode** , which was presented in IRWLE VOL. 10 No.1, has talked about apocalyptic end of world which appears to be haunting in Maggie Gee's fiction. In the paper a quote of Palmer Judith quoting on Maggie Gee, saying that, 'That Flood was the first book I'd written since September 11, and there was this feeling of fragility, that London could be destroyed.' The Flood is apparently Gee's response to the destruction of the World Trade Center in 2001.

Adeline Johns-Putra in her chapter Care**, Gender, and the climate-change: Maggie Gee's The Ice People (2014)** has talked about climate change and have tried to link it with humans and their world. She has talked about the caring relationship which intensifies the gender roles. She calls 'nature' as 'woman or mother' in her chapter on Maggie Gee's writing, as woman share everything from the giving care to others from becoming victim at the hands of masculinist powers and to exclusive relationship of mother-daughter bond. She says the care

is imbricated with complex power-plays, which need to be interrogated before these things fall under politics. Adeline has compared climate-change with change in care as seen in human relations now-a-days.

In an article **Cleaning up the "dirt": a study of Maggie gee's *My Cleaner* ,** published online on 23rd oct 2013; Focus is laid on Maggie Gee's 2005 novel, *My Cleaner*, which is critical of international divisions of domestic labour in the neo-colonial world, which reproduce global hierarchies of class, gender, and race within middle-class households of "developed" countries. Not only does Gee critically explores domestic service in today's London from global perspective, but she also makes use of the relationship between Mary Tendo (an immigrant servant woman from Uganda, one of Britain's former colonies) and her white, middle-class English employer, Vanessa Henman, to explore the tensions, contestations and renegotiations of English Identity. However, Mary's smooth relationship with the English language, as well as with her national identity, signals the lack of postcolonial approach in the novel. Here in the article, the main aim is shown to explore the ambivalences in the portrayal of a black female character in Gee's *My Cleaner.*

Methodology

In this study I have decided to research on the feminist approach in the novels of Maggie Gee and sources will be divided into primary and secondary sources. The main focus will be on secondary sources available. The primary source will be the original texts and works by the author, namely:

1. *The Burning Book (1981)*
2. *Where Are the Snows? (1991)*
3. *My Cleaner (2005)*
4. *My Driver (2009)*
5. *My Animal Life (2010)*
6. *Virginia Woolf in Manhattan (2014).*

In Secondary sources, data will be collected by rummaging through the outstanding journals and anthologies to glean and assort the existing material related to the feminist study of Maggie Gee's work. The study will also consult the different reference books of eminent scholars pertaining to the study of feminism and feminist study in English literature in general. By searching views on the Gee's novels, online resources and websites and other relevant material related to the themes in the choosen novels. And also will uphold the study, in the light of learned views and opinions of eminent scholars and critics solicited and assorted through close study of books on study of feminism, criticism on feminism and feminist theories and other related references, literary journals published in India and Abroad. My this research does not hold any hypothesis and outcome will be based on interpretations and discovery of new dimensions that will come under the scope of my study.

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